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ABSTRACT

This study used both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to examine the similarities and differences among different types of institutions of higher education in regard to federal relations. A 1994 mail survey of college presidents resulted in 1,554 respondents. Responses were analyzed based on the Carnegie classification system and control (with special emphasis on comparisons of public and private, two-year and four-year, and research and other institutions). Analysis supported the conventional wisdom that control (i.e., public or private) is the principal factor differentiating institutions, but also found that size and Carnegie classification play a role in shaping institutional attitudes and practices toward federal relations. Institutional complexity appeared to determine the degree of involvement an institution has with federal relations. Respondents from larger institutions with research and doctoral emphases reported the use of the widest array of resources to foster federal relations whereas smaller institutions with more narrowly defined roles were more likely to rely on the expertise of the major Washington associations. In spite of the variations among institutions, institutional attitudes and approaches regarding federal relations were remarkably similar. Given the value of consensus positions and a unified approach, this bodes well for the effectiveness of the Washington higher education domain. (Contains 16 references.) (PRW)

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HOW DIFFERENT TYPES OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES REPRESENT THEMSELVES IN WASHINGTON: PERSPECTIVES AND TACTICS

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This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education held in Memphis, Tennessee, October 31 - November 3, 1996. This paper was reviewed by ASHE and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC collection of ASHE conference papers.

HOW DIFFERENT TYPES OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES REPRESENT THEMSELVES IN WASHINGTON: PERSPECTIVES AND TACTICS

The Issue

Many ASHE presidents, including Patrick Terenzini in 1995, have included in their annual address the suggestion that the association put more emphasis on public policy research. This paper responds to the emerging ASHE priority by contrasting the federal relations perspectives and tactics of different types of colleges and universities.

There is much at stake in Washington for higher education, and the 104th Congress with a Republican majority eager to reshape education policy made the stakes even higher. Given the substantial impact of federal funding and regulations on colleges and universities, it is vital for higher education to represent itself effectively to policymakers. However, the variety of types of institutions makes it especially difficult to present a united front in Washington -- to speak with a single voice when different types of institutions have such different priorities and approaches.

The research question addressed in this paper is: What differences are there among different types of institutions in regard to Washington representation? The paper describes the priority the higher education domain puts on consensus building, and the reactions of public officials. Then it details the similarities and differences among different kinds of institutions in regard to federal relations. The institutions are categorized according to the Carnegie classification system, with special emphasis on comparisons of public and private, 2-year and 4-year, and research and other institutions. The paper supports the conventional wisdom that control (i.e., public or private) is the principal factor differentiating institutions, but it also shows where and to what extent size and Carnegie classification play a role in shaping institutional attitudes and practices.

Mode of Inquiry

The research for this paper was both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The first stage involved survey data collection; the second stage involved exploratory field work and interviews.[1] The quantitative data analysis was based on a 1994 mail survey of the presidents of 2,524 colleges and universities. Those included

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[1]This paper is part of what will soon be a book manuscript for Johns Hopkins Press.

were institutions defined by the Carnegie classifications as research and doctoral universities, master's colleges and universities, baccalaureate colleges, and associate of arts colleges. Specialized institutions, such as theological seminaries or schools of music, were not included. The survey had 1,554 respondents, for a 62% response rate. The majority of all types of institutions responded, including 78% of the research universities, 89% of the doctoral universities, 70% of the master's institutions, 61% of the baccalaureate colleges, and 51% of the associate of arts colleges.[2]

The second, qualitative stage of the research involved telephone and face-to-face interviews, mostly in the spring of 1995. The interviewees were a sample of college and university presidents who serve on the major Washington association boards, the presidents and government relations officers of major associations, and many of those on Capitol Hill (both members of Congress and staff) and in the executive branch (both appointed and civil service) who were identified by the higher education associations as particularly influential in shaping higher education policy outcomes. The survey and the interviews concerned higher education's federal relations, its activities and perceptions. Both survey and interview data are cited in this paper.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

This study of higher education interest groups and Washington players is unusual. Scholars, including professors of higher education who study public policy, have done relatively little research on higher education policy issues and federal relations. Most of the important research (e.g., Bailey 1975, Bloland 1985, Breneman and Finn 1978, Finn 1978, Gladieux and Wolanin 1976, King 1975) appeared a decade or more ago, and the Washington scene has changed dramatically since then. One of the most noteworthy changes is the emergence of many more players in the higher education policy arena.

Traditional political science literature has typically examined individual interest groups (especially their membership incentives, organizational politics, and lobbying tactics) and/or concerned case studies of various groups' involvement in the passage of individual pieces of legislation. In the last decade the interest group literature has been enhanced by studies of specific policy domains. A

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[2]The response rate was very high, but the respondents may not be typical of the entire population because presidents who are particularly interested in federal relations and/or whose institutions are members of the major higher education associations may have been more likely to answer the questionnaire.

policy domain includes those who focus their attention on a particular public policy area and who consider each other's activities and positions as they plan their own. Policy domain studies are important because they show the impact of structure, relationships, and approaches on policy outcomes. In so doing, they facilitate an understanding of the role of interest groups in the public policymaking process (Petracca 1992, Walker 1991). The most recent domain study is *The Hollow Core: Private Interests in National Policy Making* (Heinz et al. 1993), a comprehensive examination of the key actors in four domains: namely, agriculture, energy, health, and labor. Heinz et al. and other domain studies (e.g., Browne 1988; Laumann and Knoke 1987) provide useful models and comparative data on policy domains.

Walker (1991) discusses the causes of cooperation and specialization among the interest group members of a policy domain (68-73) and notes that occupational groups are more likely than citizen groups to be specialized in their policy approaches and focus on specific policy niches. It is natural for them to try to specialize in narrow issue areas and engage in coordination of activity with the rest of their policy community; they understand it is counterproductive to devote their energies to conflict with similar groups (Browne 1988: 39; Walker 1991: 73). Browne (1990) and Heinz et al. (1993) point out that groups find their own special policy niches by interacting with others and looking for ways to coordinate their activities without overlapping. A sort of division of labor usually emerges within the policy domain, but that division of labor is easiest to achieve if each association occupies a relatively narrow niche.

There are at least two factors that may work to undermine cohesion and consensus within a domain. The most obvious is policy conflict, the outgrowth of the fact that a particular public policy decision may affect different members of a domain in different ways. Therefore, the domain may be split in its views about which issues merit the use of domain resources, and which positions to take when engaging in policy advocacy. It may even be the case that a "win" for one part of the domain in the competition for scarce resources constitutes a "loss" for another part. It is not unusual for lawmakers to try to craft legislation so that they can "divide and conquer" a pressure group, and play one part of the group, or domain, off against the rest.

A second factor that can undermine cohesion within the domain is a high degree of competition among its component interest groups. Often the interest groups are member-supported associations. Because of their dependence on member dues, associations may need to do all they can to take credit for policy successes so as to enhance their reputations and make better appeals to new members and/or more effectively retain their current membership (Heinz et al., 1993: 384; Stewart 1975: 125). Sometimes associations engage in "public posturing" (Browne 1988: 193) and take credit for advocacy efforts in which they actually participated very little. In addition, they may compete for leadership of the

domain's policy initiatives. Both situations create fissures within the policy domain that make coordination more difficult and less likely.

It is generally agreed that a policy domain will be more effective if it can maximize cohesion and minimize internal rivalries. Kingdon (1984) points out that "if a group is plagued by internal dissension, its effectiveness is seriously impaired" (55). He notes that, to maximize their impact, the various elements of a domain should make sure they keep each other fully informed and should be careful not to undermine each other's efforts (125). While that degree of internal coordination and communication is typically hard to achieve, its value is clear. Domains with little internal conflict are more likely to be able to shape legislators' views effectively than those with lots of internal conflict, and a balkanized policy domain invites policymakers to follow their own policy preferences. Group cohesion is an important resource in convincing government officials to listen as a domain tries to influence policy agendas, decisions, and implementation (Kingdon, 1984: 55; Laumann and Knoke, 1987: 387). However, a united front is not meaningful if all the relevant interests, both groups and individuals, are not included. The consensus must include all authoritative decision-makers (Hamilton, 1977: 223-29).

In their study of four policy domains, Heinz et al. (1993) describe the subdomains that constitute each of them. The subdomains are the networks of actors who most often share the same specific policy concerns within the domain. While the subdomains are relatively stable, they join shifting internal and external coalitions as policy issues change. The coalitions are never fixed because, as Laumann and Knoke (1987) point out, corporate actors, like individuals, have multiple identities and interests, some of which may be divergent and contradictory. They note that there is no single "master identity" for institutions, just as there is none for individuals (396). The fact that a single institution has multiple identities helps to mitigate the conflicts that might occur within the policy domain.

Consensus Building in the Higher Education Domain

While the domain studies of special significance in the social science literature concern occupationally-based groups, especially profit-sector groups, higher education is different because it is part of the nonprofit sector. Furthermore, higher education, like every domain, has a unique culture and self-image that shape its federal relations structure and lobbying strategies in unique ways.

Higher education has its own subdomains, just as other domains do. Conventional wisdom says its most important subdomains are the following: public vs. private institutions; two-year vs. four-year; and research universities vs. other institutions (with the latter, at least theoretically, putting teaching

ahead of research in their list of priorities). However, higher education's subdomains are more varied and numerous than those of most policy domains. Scholars who have written about higher education policy in the past have usually commented on the divergence of views among types of institutions and the ways that public policies affect different kinds of institutions differently (e.g., Breneman and Finn 1978, Finn 1978, Bloland 1985, Stewart 1975). The higher education domain is distinguished by its diversity.

The Major Associations' Contributions to Consensus Building

Although it is especially diverse, the higher education domain puts a high priority on consensus building. That priority is reflected in the well-defined association structure that overlays and integrates the higher education domain through a system of overlapping memberships. While there are hundreds of higher education associations dealing with federal public policy issues, the association structure is characterized by the predominance of six major presidentially-based associations in Washington. They are presidentially-based in the sense that the presidents of colleges and universities are designated as the principal institutional representatives even though the real members of the associations are the institutions themselves.

Together the major associations are known as the Big Six. They are: the Association of American Universities (AAU); the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC); the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU); the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU); and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC). The American Council on Education (ACE) serves as the umbrella association for the other five.

Specifically, AACC represents two-year institutions, mostly public but some private. AASCU represents public comprehensive universities, most of which are four-year but a few of which have two-year degree programs as well. NASULGC represents public universities that are either research or master's, and its relatively small membership is due to the fact that it is comprised primarily of land-grant institutions (i.e., those linked historically to federal legislation providing land for public higher education). AAU has the smallest membership because it represents the elite research universities, about half public and half private, with admission by invitation only. NAICU represents private institutions, mostly liberal arts colleges, but with other member institutions ranging from research universities to two-year colleges. All five major presidentially-based associations are members of ACE, as are hundreds of other higher education associations, and every type of accredited college and university, including public and private, large and small. In other words, ACE serves as the national coordinating body for higher education.

Higher education's subdomains constitute the organizing principles for five of higher education's major associations, each of which attracts and articulates the positions of two subdomains. The multiple identities of individual institutions are reflected in their choice of association memberships. For example, a private research university belonging to AAU is also likely to be a member of NAICU, while a public research university in AAU will also join NASULGC. NASULGC's membership overlaps substantially with that of AASCU since both have only public institutions as members. A public two-year college, when it is a component of a comprehensive university, might join both AACC and AASCU, and a private two-year college would be invited to join both AACC and NAICU. Finally, the members of all five of these associations, in order to foster the domain's collaboration on federal relations, often join ACE as well. These overlapping association memberships facilitate the development of consensus positions by the higher education domain.

It is unusual for such a diverse domain to put such a high priority on consensus building. As David Baime, AACC Director of Government Relations, noted, "Our attempt to strive toward one position is our defining characteristic." (Interview: April 11, 1995). In that respect, higher education's Washington culture replicates the culture of the campuses, where higher education has historically operated with a collegial decisionmaking process based on shared governance. The process of shared governance means that academic decisionmaking typically follows a democratic, participatory model. The consensus building process is usually lengthy and arduous, and its hallmarks are attenuated debate and thorough testing of ideas. The myriad of faculty committees, the duration of their deliberations, and the slowness of resolution of major campus controversies are well-known trademarks of academic institutions.

The academic culture pervades the Washington higher education domain because the presidents of the major associations are all academicians, usually former college presidents. The presidents typically earned Ph.D.s in the disciplines, rose through the ranks from assistant professor to full professor, and then assumed administrative positions as department chairs and deans before moving on to the presidency of a college or university. When they assume association presidencies, they bring to the Washington scene the values of their former campuses, including the importance of collegial decisionmaking process, and that process is applied to the relations both within and among associations.

Apart from campus culture, the other reason that the domain devotes so much energy to development of consensus is that association leaders believe consensus is more effective than a divergence of views. Jeanne Narum, head of the Office of Independent Colleges, affirmed that "it is critical to come in with one voice" when engaging in policy advocacy. (Interview: October 10, 1993). One lobbyist connected loss of consensus with political vulnerability, explaining, "When the higher education community is fractured, lawmakers do whatever they choose to

do." According to Rebecca Timmons, ACE Director of Governmental Relations, "The Hill... tries to divide us, but when we do not have consensus, we are 'self-canceling.'" (Interview: February 17, 1994).

Below the top leadership level, the Washington government relations staff are not always enthusiastic about applying the campus norm of participatory democracy to the Washington policymaking process. Typically the staff have expertise in public policy (often a master's degree from a school of public policy and/or years of experience on Capitol Hill or in the executive branch), and many of them have spent little time on the campuses and have little patience for campus mores. Some staff commented on the difficulty of using a democratic decisionmaking process in Washington. They noted that public policymaking on Capitol Hill, for example, does not proceed at the slow pace of the campuses, and they bemoaned the difficulty of consulting widely and hammering out a consensus position fast enough to allow them to be players in the policymaking process. A university lobbyist explained: "Higher ed is crippled by not being courageous enough to take positions that will alienate some members... It brings habits of collegiality and consensus-building to Washington where those attributes do not fit. They hurt our ability to move quickly and deal with short term problems and opportunities. At the One Dupont Circle[3] meeting they just go around the room and let everyone say something and by the time they're done, there is no action plan. Everyone is afraid of offending everyone else. Few people are brave enough to go out on a limb. Higher ed may get left in the dust because of its slow responses."

Higher education's proclivity for collegial decisionmaking has been longstanding: even in 1962 Babbidge and Rosensweig described the process associations went through to secure members' approval before they could comment on legislation, and they noted that the collegial relationship of the associations dictated that they remain silent if they disagreed with each other's positions (110-113). Similarly, Bloland (1969) discussed the tendency of the associations to censure any member of the higher education domain who was overly and independently aggressive in regard to policy advocacy, rather than waiting for the whole community to take a stand (158).

The fact that there are many more players in Washington now means that it takes even longer to touch all the bases and come to consensus. Association staff and campus representatives talked about the increase in the volume of communication among them. They said there are more informal communications than ever, by phone, by fax, by e-mail, and the number of

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[3]One Dupont Circle is the address of the National Center for Higher Education where dozens of higher education associations are located.

meetings has grown, as well as the number of attendees. As Dick Knapp, Government Relations Vice President of the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC), put it, "You spend half your life in meetings now...."

Public Officials' Views on Consensus

Public officials have no common perception of whether higher education typically presents them with consensus positions, as opposed to differing views, and they also lack a common perception about the value and timing of consensus positions. Over time they have often provided conflicting advice to the higher education domain (Gladieux in Mosher and Wagnoner 1978: 272).

Many public officials contend that consensus positions are effective in producing the policy outcomes that the higher education domain desires. For example, in response to the question: "Are there times when it is better for higher education to present you with information about the different positions of different types of institutions, or is it better to present a unified position?" some interviewees urged compromise, expressing the view that speaking with "one voice" is "important," even "more powerful." They expressed their understanding that diverse viewpoints exist within the domain. However, a National Science Foundation official said that higher education "should compromise and get its act together anyway." Similarly, a Congressional staff member argued that in a period of "very scarce resources... the specter of a divided higher education community fighting amongst itself for a part of a smaller pie will, I am afraid, result only in everyone losing."

Other public officials noted that even though the presentation of differing viewpoints might be detrimental to higher education's own objectives, an understanding of the differences certainly made their own jobs easier. Thomas Wolanin, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Legislation in the Department of Education, said, "[Hearing different viewpoints is] good for policymakers. It gives them lots of choices and options, but it is not good for higher ed." (Interview: May 3, 1995)

There are also public officials who question the utility and/or accuracy of consensus positions. Since ACE's letters to members of Congress on behalf of the higher education domain by definition represent the lowest common denominator, officials commented that, in some cases, the letters seem like "pablum" -- that is, so bland that there is nothing gained by articulating the position. Robert Shireman, Legislative Director to Senator Paul Simon, said: "Unified positions get so watered down that Congress doesn't get the benefit of the discussion that went into them, and higher education's joint letter, when it comes out, is not sufficiently enlightening." (Interview: June 1, 1995). Arguing in the same vein, another public official pointed out that "unity doesn't help if it's not accurate." Preferring that differing elements in the community "take

separate positions and stick to them," he asserted that "a more rational higher education policy would result." The same person, one of the leaders of the U.S. Department of Education, bemoaned the consensus approach, saying "It's too bad that the higher education community asks us to treat Harvard the same way that we treat any truck driver school."

Despite adopting a consensus position in public, some institutions continue to pursue their own interests in private. "Too often a group will proclaim unity while they're in my office, and then one or two people will come back later with their own separate agendas that they didn't tell us in the first place," reported another Department of Education official.

Other public officials feel that the issue of differing views or consensus positions is simply a matter of timing. They want to hear differing perspectives early in a policy debate, but as the policy outcomes are better specified, they appreciate consensus. For example, James Wilson, a member of the staff of the House Committee on Science, said: "I like to hear different views, but I need compromises eventually." (Interview: June 2, 1995)

Finally, there are a few public officials who applaud higher education's differing views and say they prefer to hear a straight story about institutional divergence, at least occasionally. For example, Assistant Secretary of Education David Longanecker said: "One voice doesn't accurately reflect the diversity of education. If higher ed always spoke with one voice, the perception of higher ed would be different. Higher ed maintains its integrity by giving honest views and therefore, because they are honest, the views of the differing sectors may vary. The image of higher education is better because they are not solely banded together because of greed, as the banks are, for instance." (Interview: May 3, 1995)

Nonetheless, it is clear that the Washington higher education associations and most public officials agree that, when possible, the domain should adopt a consensus position. Given the diversity of higher education, there are, of course, a large number of factors working against the successful development of consensus.

Institutional Differences Regarding Consensus

Not surprisingly, the presidents of different kinds of institutions have varying views of the importance of consensus. In this study, institutional presidents were asked first how they perceive the associations' current approach to presenting issues to federal policymakers. When asked whether they believe that the associations typically arrive at a compromise and present a unified higher education position, or acknowledge the conflicting interests and present different positions, the presidents were evenly divided (Table 1). Responding to

a similar question about how the associations *should* present issues, nearly two-thirds agreed that presenting a single, unified position is preferable to conveying multiple viewpoints (Table 2).

Table 1. Presidential views on consensus.

Associations are likely to...

	Valid Percent
Compromise, present unified position	50.9
Recognize conflict, present different positions	49.1
Total	100.0

Table 2. Presidential preference for consensus.

Associations should...

	Valid Percent
Compromise, present unified position	64.1
Recognize conflict, present different positions	35.9
Total	100.0

A closer analysis reveals some variation apparently associated with institutional size and control. A preliminary analysis revealed that presidents of small institutions responded differently than those of mid-size or large institutions, preferring that different positions be presented. (ANOVA, $df = 2$, $F = 5.840$ $p < .01$). Presidents of private colleges and universities appeared significantly more likely to prefer to have diverse views voiced than did public institution leaders ($t = -2.909$, $p < .01$). These results suggest that small and private institutions are most concerned that their interests may be overlooked in the process of compromise. That is, when a united position is presented, it may not truly represent the views of these colleges and universities.

To explore more deeply this preference for consensus, the data were recoded by size and control in order to examine differences among six combined institutional types ranging from "small private" to "large public." Additional analysis revealed an interesting point, that large private institutions are consistent with small private schools in their attitudes toward achieving consensus (Table 3). Nearly half of the respondents in these two segments

reported a preference for voicing divergent views. Because private institutions make up a fairly small proportion (15%) of the "large" group, their responses were simply overshadowed by those of public institutions voicing strong support for consensus. Medium-size private institutions, however, closely approach the views of publics of all sizes, with nearly two-thirds of these presidents backing the compromise position.

Table 3. Preference for consensus, by institutional size and control.

Preference for Consensus, by institutional size and control [a]

			Different associations should...		
			Compromise	Differ	Total
Institution Type	Small Private	Count	85	78	163
		% of Institution Type	52.1%	47.9%	100.0%
	Small Public	Count	39	25	64
		% of Institution Type	60.9%	39.1%	100.0%
	Medium Private	Count	201	110	311
		% of Institution Type	64.6%	35.4%	100.0%
	Medium Public	Count	292	130	422
		% of Institution Type	69.2%	30.8%	100.0%
	Large Private	Count	33	29	62
		% of Institution Type	53.2%	46.8%	100.0%
	Large Public	Count	236	122	358
		% of Institution Type	65.9%	34.1%	100.0%
Total		Count	886	494	1380
		% of Total	64.2%	35.8%	100.0%

a. Small = < 1,000 Full-time equivalent students (FTEs); Medium = 1,001 to 5,000 FTEs; Large = > 5,000 FTEs.

Research universities have a great deal at stake in federal relations because federal funding for research, especially in science and health, has such a large impact on them. Among large research institutions (those enrolling more than 5,000 students), support for consensus was voiced by 58.5% of the public, as compared to 50% of private research university leaders who responded. By Carnegie classification research universities are least likely to support adoption

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of a united position, preferring to define and promote their own positions on federal issues even when they may not represent the voice of the entire higher education domain (Table 4).

Table 4. Preference for consensus, by Carnegie classification.

Preference for consensus, by Carnegie classification

			Different associations should...		
			Compromise	Differ	Total
Carnegie Classification	Associate of Arts	Count	347	176	523
		% of Carnegie Classification	66.3%	33.7%	100.0%
	Baccalaureate	Count	201	133	334
		% of Carnegie Classification	60.2%	39.8%	100.0%
	Master's	Count	235	108	343
		% of Carnegie Classification	68.5%	31.5%	100.0%
	Doctoral	Count	53	39	92
		% of Carnegie Classification	57.6%	42.4%	100.0%
	Research	Count	53	44	97
		% of Carnegie Classification	54.6%	45.4%	100.0%
Total		Count	889	500	1389
		% of Total	64.0%	36.0%	100.0%

ACE is broadly regarded as the major voice for higher education, and sixty percent of presidents surveyed confirmed that they think ACE speaks for the domain. When evaluating responses according to institutional size, control, and two- or four-year status, no significant differences were revealed. However, presidents who report that ACE is their primary association for federal relations were far more likely to agree that ACE is the major voice for higher education than those whose primary affiliation is with any of the other Big Six associations (ANOVA, $df = 6$, $F = 10.938$, $p < .001$). (See Table 5.) The survey defined "primary association" as the one on which presidents rely most often for the federal issues of great importance to their institutions.[4]

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[4] It is interesting to note that more than one hundred respondents identified ACE as their primary association. The American Council on Education was founded to serve a coordinating role and as an "umbrella" association it is not typically considered a primary association for any particular group of institutions.

Table 5. Agreement that ACE speaks for higher education, by primary association.

Agreement that ACE speaks for higher education, by primary association

			ACE as Major Voice		
			No	Yes	Total
Primary Association	AACC	Count	180	220	400
		% of Primary Association	45.0%	55.0%	100.0%
	AASCU	Count	90	123	213
		% of Primary Association	42.3%	57.7%	100.0%
	AAU	Count	15	17	32
		% of Primary Association	46.9%	53.1%	100.0%
	ACE	Count	5	100	105
		% of Primary Association	4.8%	95.2%	100.0%
	NAICU	Count	171	210	381
		% of Primary Association	44.9%	55.1%	100.0%
	NASULGC	Count	32	47	79
		% of Primary Association	40.5%	59.5%	100.0%
	None of these	Count	28	38	66
		% of Primary Association	42.4%	57.6%	100.0%
Total		Count	521	755	1276
		% of Total	40.8%	59.2%	100.0%

Institutional Differences in Washington Representation

Most colleges and universities rely on campus-based federal relations staff and the major higher education associations to convey their views to Washington policymakers. In addition, some employ for-profit Washington law, consulting, and lobbying firms, and a few have established their own Washington offices. The number of colleges and universities reporting staff in the nation's capital is small, with fewer than 5% of institutional leaders reporting full-time and/or part-time staff in Washington in 1994. Small but significant correlations suggest that large, public institutions with programs beyond the associate degree level are more likely than others to establish Washington offices (Table 6).

Table 6. Relationship between size, control, program level and Washington staff.

Correlations

		Size[a]	Control[b]	Program Level[c]	Washington Staff[d]
Pearson Correlation	Size	1.000	-.403**	.075**	.197**
	Control	-.403**	1.000	.500**	-.060*
	Program Level	.075**	.500**	1.000	.101**
	Washington Staff	.197**	-.060*	.101**	1.000

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

a. 1= <1,000 Full-time equivalent students (FTEs), 2 = 1,001 to 5,000 FTEs; 3 = > 5,000 FTEs.

b. 1= Public, 2 = Private.

c. 1 = 2-Year college, 2 = All others.

d. 0 = None, 1 = One or more staff members in Washington.

By Carnegie classification, research and doctoral universities tend to place staff in Washington more than others do, consistent with their need to monitor federal regulations and pursue research funding (ANOVA, $df=6$, $F= 40.273$, $p<.001$). While eleven community colleges report having Washington staff, these are rare exceptions, as state and local government relations usually demand more frequent and immediate attention from two-year colleges. Baccalaureate-granting colleges (mostly private, and small or medium- sized) are least likely to employ Washington staff, undoubtedly because of budgetary constraints (Table 7).

Table 7. Institutions reporting federal relations staff in Washington.

Washington staff, by Carnegie classification

			Washington Staff		
			None	One or more positions	Total
Carnegie Classification	Associate of Arts	Count	525	11	536
		% of Carnegie Classification	97.9%	2.1%	100.0%
	Baccalaureate	Count	344	4	348
		% of Carnegie Classification	98.9%	1.1%	100.0%
	Master's	Count	330	16	346
		% of Carnegie Classification	95.4%	4.6%	100.0%
	Doctoral	Count	80	11	91
		% of Carnegie Classification	87.9%	12.1%	100.0%
	Research	Count	63	26	89
		% of Carnegie Classification	70.8%	29.2%	100.0%
Total		Count	1342	68	1410
		% of Total	95.2%	4.8%	100.0%

Employing the expertise of for-profit law, consulting, or lobbying firms is referred to as using "hired guns," a practice employed at least occasionally by one-sixth of the survey respondents. Only 33 institutions (2.2%) reported having used a Washington firm "often," while the overwhelming majority indicated that they never have done so (Table 8). More than half of large, private universities have hired outside firms at least occasionally, as have more than a quarter of the large, public institutions. Again we find that institutions that typically have the greatest involvement in federal policy issues, i.e., research and doctoral institutions, are those most likely to utilize this tactic. In contrast, just one in ten associate of arts or baccalaureate-granting institutions have employed a for-profit Washington firm for federal relations.

Table 8. Employment of "hired guns" in Washington.

Use of "hired guns," by institutional size and control

			Employed Washington firm?			
			No, never	Yes, occasionally	Yes, often	Total
Institution Type	Small Private	Count	180	7	1	188
		% of Institution Type	95.7%	3.7%	.5%	100.0%
	Small Public	Count	61	7		68
		% of Institution Type	89.7%	10.3%		100.0%
	Medium Private	Count	275	52	7	334
		% of Institution Type	82.3%	15.6%	2.1%	100.0%
	Medium Public	Count	403	51	3	457
		% of Institution Type	88.2%	11.2%	.7%	100.0%
	Large Private	Count	32	28	8	68
		% of Institution Type	47.1%	41.2%	11.8%	100.0%
	Large Public	Count	282	85	14	381
		% of Institution Type	74.0%	22.3%	3.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	1233	230	33	1496
		% of Institution Type	82.4%	15.4%	2.2%	100.0%

The questionnaire asked presidents whether their institution has a political action committee (PAC) for federal relations. Among the responding institutions, only eleven reported having institutional PACs. All are public colleges or universities enrolling at least 1,000 students. Two are doctoral institutions, two are master's level institutions, and the remaining seven are associate of arts colleges. While research universities are much more likely than others to have Washington offices and to employ hired guns to monitor and influence public policy, they clearly have made a deliberate choice not to create PACs.

Just as institutional PACs have found limited support, so has the idea of establishing PACs for the Big Six associations. When college and university presidents were asked whether the six major higher education associations should utilize PACs to "make campaign contributions to Congressional

candidates and incumbent members of Congress," their opposition was clear. Five out of six agreed that the associations should not have PACs. Associate of arts institutional respondents responded differently than their colleagues on this issue (Table 9), with more than one fifth indicating support (ANOVA, df = 4, F = 9.929, p < .001). (Among other Carnegie classifications, support for Big Six association PACs was consistently lower, ranging from 10.3 to 12.0%.) That is probably due to the fact that the proprietary school association, the Career College Association, does have a PAC, and its members, which are mostly two-year institutions, have clearly benefited politically from the PAC's influence on public policymaking.

Table 9. Presidential support for PACs, by Carnegie classification.

Support for Association PACs

			Association should have PACs		
			No	Yes	Total
Carnegie Classification	Associate of Arts	Count	436	128	564
		% of Carnegie Classification	77.3%	22.7%	100.0%
	Baccalaureate	Count	331	38	369
		% of Carnegie Classification	89.7%	10.3%	100.0%
	Master's	Count	324	39	363
		% of Carnegie Classification	89.3%	10.7%	100.0%
	Doctoral	Count	86	11	97
		% of Carnegie Classification	88.7%	11.3%	100.0%
	Research	Count	88	12	100
		% of Carnegie Classification	88.0%	12.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	1265	228	1493
		% of Carnegie Classification	84.7%	15.3%	100.0%

A small but highly significant difference appeared by institutional control, with public presidents marginally more likely than private to support association PACs ($t = 4.042$, $p < .001$). This finding is reinforced when the responses are analyzed according to primary association membership (Table 10). While no association approaches majority support, AACC and NASULGC members are much more likely than their counterparts to favor PACs (ANOVA, $df = 5$, $F = 8.264$, $p < .001$).

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Table 10. Presidential support for PACs, by primary association.

Support for Association PACs, by Primary Association

			Association should have PACs		
			No	Yes	Total
Primary Association	AACC	Count	369	107	476
		% of Primary Association	77.5%	22.5%	100.0%
	AASCU	Count	194	20	214
		% of Primary Association	90.7%	9.3%	100.0%
	AAU	Count	33	2	35
		% of Primary Association	94.3%	5.7%	100.0%
	ACE	Count	92	13	105
		% of Primary Association	87.6%	12.4%	100.0%
	NAICU	Count	383	40	423
		% of Primary Association	90.5%	9.5%	100.0%
	NASULGC	Count	68	14	82
		% of Primary Association	82.9%	17.1%	100.0%
	None of these	Count	58	15	73
		% of Primary Association	79.5%	20.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	1197	211	1408
		% of Primary Association	85.0%	15.0%	100.0%

When asked upon whom they rely to represent their interests in Washington, nine out of ten presidents agreed that they count on the Big Six. While nearly one-third also rely on other resources, more than half rely on the associations alone. That proportion increases to nearly two-thirds when considering only institutions having no Washington staff. The differences in institutional choices appear not to be affected by size of institution, but control is an important element. Private institutions appear to mobilize a broader range of resources than their public counterparts, reporting a significantly different pattern of representation (ANOVA, $df = 1$, $F=17.053$, $p < .001$). Just half rely solely on the Big Six, while more than one-third also use other "offices, groups, or firms,"

which typically means they used specialized associations and/or hired guns. Among public colleges and universities, sixty percent count on the Big Six for Washington representation, with more than one-quarter also employing outside help. A small group indicate reliance only on other associations and firms, not utilizing the Big Six at all (Table 11).

Table 11. Public and private reliance on Washington representatives for federal relations.

Reliance on Washington Representatives, by Institutional Control

			Washington Voice			
			Other offices, groups, firms	Big Six and others	Big Six	Total
Control	Public	Count	89	246	545	880
		% of Control	10.1%	28.0%	61.9%	100.0%
	Private	Count	77	199	279	555
		% of Control	13.9%	35.9%	50.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	166	445	824	1435
		% of Control	11.6%	31.0%	57.4%	100.0%

The presidents were asked whether they thought that ACE and their primary association "should give a higher priority to federal relations." The presidents' preference for higher priority is much stronger in regard to ACE than in regard to their primary associations (Tables 12 and 13). More than two-thirds preferred that ACE give federal relations a higher priority. Regarding their primary associations, fully half of the respondents preferred that the priority remain the "same as now," with less than one-third preferring higher priority. Only one percent preferred that the associations, including ACE, assign federal relations lower priority.

Table 12. Preferred federal relations priority for primary association.

Primary Association Federal Relations Priority [a]

	Valid Percent
Somewhat lower	.4
Same as now	52.7
Somewhat higher	35.6
Much higher	11.3
Total	100.0

a. N=1387

Table 13. Preferred federal relations priority for ACE.

ACE Federal Relations Priority [a]

	Valid Percent
Much lower	.5
Somewhat lower	1.0
Same as now	30.6
Somewhat higher	46.8
Much higher	21.1
Total	100.0

a. N=1311

There is a significant positive correlation between the preferred primary association priority and the preferred ACE priority ($r = .475$, $p < .01$). That is, those who desire that the primary associations give considerable attention to federal relations are likely to have the same expectations of ACE. Six out of ten of the respondents indicating AASCU, AAU, ACE, and NAICU as their primary association prefer that their associations maintain the federal relations efforts at the current level of priority ("same as now"). AACC and NASULGC members were least likely to be satisfied with the current level of priority their association places on federal relations, and were most likely to prefer a higher priority.

To better understand the familiarity of the presidents with the issues presented in the study, the questionnaire asked on what respondents based the views expressed in the survey. From three response alternatives, 51.2% of the presidents selected "informed opinion," while 27.7% chose "general impression," and 21.1% claimed "intimate knowledge." A modest correlation suggests that as institutional size increases, so does presidential familiarity with federal relations activity ($r = .186^{**}$, $p < .01$).

In a comparison of means, responses of public presidents did not differ significantly from private; however, considering institutional type, which includes both size and control, some interesting differences emerged (ANOVA, $df = 5$, $F = 12.114$, $p < .001$). Large private institutions report a significantly higher level of presidential expertise than large public, and medium private significantly higher than medium public. Presidents of small institutions do not appear to differ by institutional control in their self-reported familiarity with the survey issues (Table 14). They are the least informed group.

Table 14. By institutional size and control, presidential familiarity with federal relations and associations.

Presidential Familiarity, by Institutional Size and Control [a]

			Basis for Reporting			
			General impression	Informed opinion	Intimate knowledge	Total
	Small Private	Count	77	85	23	185
		% of Institution Type	41.6%	45.9%	12.4%	100.0%
	Small Public	Count	30	27	10	67
		% of Institution Type	44.8%	40.3%	14.9%	100.0%
	Medium Private	Count	75	184	71	330
		% of Institution Type	22.7%	55.8%	21.5%	100.0%
	Medium Public	Count	139	229	80	448
		% of Institution Type	31.0%	51.1%	17.9%	100.0%
	Large Private	Count	9	33	24	66
		% of Institution Type	13.6%	50.0%	36.4%	100.0%
	Large Public	Count	74	201	98	373
		% of Institution Type	19.8%	53.9%	26.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	404	759	306	1469
		% of Institution Type	27.5%	51.7%	20.8%	100.0%

[a] Small = < 1,000 Full-time equivalent students (FTEs); Medium = 1,001 to 5,000 FTEs; Large = > 5,000 FTEs

Examining reported familiarity by Carnegie classification, we find that presidents of research universities rate themselves as most informed, followed

closely by doctoral, then master's, then baccalaureate, and, lastly, associate of arts institutions (Table 15).

Table 15. By Carnegie classification, presidential familiarity with federal relations and associations.

Presidential Familiarity [a]

Basis for Reporting		
Associate of Arts	Mean	1.83
	N	560
	Std. Deviation	.68
Baccalaureate	Mean	1.91
	N	365
	Std. Deviation	.69
Master's	Mean	2.00
	N	363
	Std. Deviation	.70
Doctoral	Mean	2.15
	N	95
	Std. Deviation	.67
Research	Mean	2.18
	N	97
	Std. Deviation	.69
Total	Mean	1.94
	N	1480
	Std. Deviation	.69

[a] 1 = General impression; 2 = Informed opinion; 3 = Intimate knowledge

Summary

The higher education domain is unusually diverse. It includes colleges and universities of all sizes and types -- from two-year community colleges to large research universities. This paper has shown the priority the higher education domain places on consensus, as well as the points at which the perceptions and practices of various types of institutions and associations diverge. Conventional wisdom has always said that institutional control, either public or private, is most often the determining factor in institutional perspectives and choice of lobbying tactics. Analysis of data from the 1994 survey of college and university presidents confirms that wisdom but indicates that institutional size and

Carnegie classification are also significant in affecting particular attitudes and approaches.

Consensus

Private institutions, both large and small, are much more likely to prefer that different positions be presented to the federal government, rather than a unified higher education position, while all sizes of public institutions prefer presenting a unified position to the federal government. Research institutions are more likely to favor presenting different positions to the federal government than other institutions are.

Views on Association PACs

Public institutions are more likely than private to support the establishment of PACs by the major Washington associations. Consistent with this finding, AACC and NASULGC members tend more often to favor them. Associate of arts colleges, which are mostly public, have more support for the establishment of association PACs than do other types of institutions.

Institutional Representation in Washington

More public institutions than private tend to rely solely on the Big Six associations for federal relations assistance, while more private institutions rely on a combination of the Big Six and other offices, groups, and firms.

As institutional size increases, so does the likelihood of having Washington staff and using hired guns. Both control and size are factors, as more than half of the large, private institutions report using hired guns, compared to one-fourth of large, public universities. By Carnegie classification, research and doctoral institutions are most likely to utilize these resources.

Presidential Familiarity with Federal Relations

The degree of college and university presidents' self-reported knowledge about federal relations varies according to both control and institutional size: the larger the institution, the more knowledgeable the president, and as a general rule, private college and university presidents of the large and medium-size institutions are more knowledgeable than public institution presidents of comparable size.

Conclusions

Overall, institutional complexity seems to determine the degree of involvement an institution has with federal relations. Larger institutions with research and doctoral emphases use the widest array of federal relations resources. Smaller

institutions with more narrowly defined roles (baccalaureate and associate of arts, for example) are more likely to rely on the expertise of the major Washington associations, rather than creating their own Washington presence. Similarly, the majority of presidents of associate of arts and baccalaureate colleges are less likely to have federal relations expertise than those who represent master's and doctoral institutions.

These findings confirm the importance of the federal relations role of the higher education associations. Most colleges and universities do not have the resources to establish offices in Washington or to hire for-profit lobbying firms. Instead, they rely heavily on the Big Six associations to monitor policy issues for them and speak on their behalf to the federal government.

Reliance on the associations is complicated by the issue of consensus. While the majority of presidents still consider consensus to be the best approach to federal policymakers, some are willing to act independently on behalf of their institutions, potentially undermining the unified position favored by the majority of their colleagues.

Because there is huge variation among colleges and universities, the most noteworthy finding in this study may be that there is less variation among institutional attitudes and approaches than one might expect. The higher education community shares a remarkably uniform outlook in regard to federal relations. Given the value of consensus positions and a unified approach, this finding bodes well for the effectiveness of the Washington higher education domain.

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